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ABSTRACT

Presenting recent educational reforms in New Zealand and the impact they have had on teachers, this paper gives a brief overview of the historical position of teachers in an education system that categorized them in a particular way as "professionals." Beginning in 1987, changes within New Zealand government have caused a repositioning of teachers. The changes within the state have de-skilled and disempowered teachers and made the education system much less democratic. Out of the struggles of the past few years, there have emerged new democratic alliances that teachers have formed with forces outside of the state, alliances that are potentially very powerful. Forty-eight references are included. (DB)

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Educational Reform in New Zealand:
Contesting the role of the teacher

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Educational Reform in New Zealand: Contesting the role of the teacher*

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This paper analyses aspects of the repositioning of teachers within the recent and continuing reform of education in New Zealand. By 'repositioning', I mean changes in the institutional, ideological and industrial relations of teachers during the reform process, and their effects. My focus in this paper is specifically on teachers in primary and secondary state schools, although similar policy effects have been faced by pre-school and tertiary teachers. Despite similarities between the outcomes of educational reform in Britain and New Zealand (Evans and Davies, 1990), as well as the effects of these on teachers, three features seem to stand out as being different in the two countries.

The first of these is relationships within the central state. In both countries, educational reform has had centralising tendencies (Ball, 1988, 1990; Lawn and Ozga, 1986; Codd, Gordon and Harker 1990), despite a stated intention of bringing about decentralisation. In Britain, however, central state agencies remained in their previous form, whereas in New Zealand the Department of Education was abolished and replaced by a smaller Ministry (Ramsay, 1991; Codd, 1990; Martin, 1991), and regional education bodies were also abolished. Central to changes in New Zealand, too, has been the struggle between educational agencies and others, in particular the State Services Commission and the Treasury, over control of educational policy (Boston, 1988; Boston, Haig and Lauder, 1988; Lauder, Middleton, Boston and Wylie, 1988; Gordon, forthcoming b). This struggle has encompassed what Grace (1990) called 'ideological manoeuvre' in the policy process, and has highlighted the institutional specificities of state agencies.

The second difference between the two countries has been in teacher organisations. In England, there are a wide range of teacher unions, evoking different responses to the reform process. The disorganising and weakening effects of this are evident in the literature (for example, Ball, 1988; Mac an Ghaill, 1991). In New Zealand, there are

* This paper could not have been written without financial assistance from the University of Canterbury, access to the files of the Post-Primary Teacher's Association and data supplied by David Mitchell of the 'Monitoring Today's Schools' project at the University of Waikato, which is used in raw form in part three of this paper. My thanks to all these people and organisations.

two central union organisations for teachers in state schools, one representing primary teachers and one in the secondary sector. At the time of writing, these unions have agreed in principle to amalgamate, and certainly their responses to the reforms have been very similar, and co-ordinated action has taken place over a number of issues.

The third area of difference is the relationship between teachers and civil society, and in particular school boards. In New Zealand, a notable feature of the reform process has been the tendency for Boards to side with teachers against elements of the reform process. In Britain, Ball (1990) describes the 1980s as a decade in which teachers and schools have been scapegoated as the causes of social and economic failures in Britain. Such trends are largely absent in New Zealand, or at least have occurred to a lesser extent. This is perhaps largely because the educational reforms in Britain have their genesis as far back as the Callaghan speech of 1976 and the William Tyndale affair (Dale, 1989), whereas in New Zealand they arrived very suddenly and with little prior warning or preparation.

All of these differences have had major implications for the ability to organise democratically against what are seen to be inherently anti-democratic reforms (both in their nature - see Snook, 1991; and in the processes of implementation). The technocratic and instrumentalist basis of state reforms in New Zealand, and their application to the schooling system have produced a narrow managerialist agenda that not only excludes, but also prohibits, consultation and oppositional action by teachers (Codd, 1991; for an example see State Services Commission, 1990).

In both countries, the recent reforms in education have been based on the extension of elements of monetarist theory into the state, aiming to displace the structures, practices and ideologies underpinning the previous Keynesian settlement. In absolute terms, the implementation of a pure monetarism would involve the total destruction of the welfare state. This has not been attempted in either Britain or New Zealand. Indeed, as Chris Rudd (1991) notes, neither country has had much success in reducing the overall size or scope of the welfare state, despite years of restructuring, re-ordering of priorities and, in New Zealand at least, the imposition of a new managerial ethos and the politicisation of the public service.

The paper begins with a brief overview of the historical position of teachers in the education system, which framed them in a particular way as 'professionals', and the extent to which this professionalism was a product of the Keynesian era, and thus is under threat at present. The middle section analyses the changing role of the state in the

education system from 1987 onwards, and the consequent repositioning of teachers. This section concludes that the breakdown of the Keynesian settlement has deskilled and disempowered teachers, with consequent effects on democracy in the education system. The final section looks at the emergence, out of the struggles of the past few years, of new democratic alliances which undermine the intent of the educational reforms and offer a basis, albeit an insecure one, for the development of a new democratic settlement in education.

The Keynesian settlement: teachers as professionals

The two teacher unions grew up organically alongside the state schooling system in New Zealand. The first union, the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) was established shortly after the 1877 Act which formed a universal and compulsory education system in New Zealand. The Institute's aim was to provide a professional organisation for the swelling ranks of teachers, mostly at the primary level, and in particular, initially, to ensure that wide regional disparities in pay rates for teachers were removed (Gordon and Wilson, 1992). From the outset, it aimed at promoting policy change within education through negotiation and discussion, rather than by the use of militant tactics (Ingle, 1971 p. 31).

This stance was reinforced by the close relationship the NZEI developed with the Department of Education, with teachers colleges and with successive governments. In return for its moderate position, the NZEI was, until the late 1980s, allowed an integral role in policy development and policy implementation processes in New Zealand state education (Roth, 1987), although in the post-war period, this role was confined largely to primary schooling.

The second teacher union, the Post Primary Teacher's Association (PPTA), was formed in 1952 as a result of the post-war rise in the school leaving age which saw the extension of secondary education to all children. Throughout its short history, the PPTA has taken a more militant stance than the NZEI. Partly as a result of this, the PPTA never had the close relationship with government agencies that NZEI experienced, and yet was able to act effectively on a range of professional issues, notably the curriculum and assessment (Webster, 1981) and, more recently, teacher appraisal.

The dominant ethos in New Zealand throughout much of this century has been that unionism, which was equated with industrial action, could not be reconciled with

professionalism. In particular, there was a belief that unionism had no place in the education sector. There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, unionism was perceived as mainly a male activity, whilst the teaching force was predominantly female. Second, unionism belonged to the working classes, in particular to the freezing workers, watersiders and other large industrial groups associated with New Zealand's primary economic role of the time: the processing and export of farm products to Britain and Europe. Thirdly, to be involved in union activity was to be unpatriotic and irresponsible; two qualities which sat ill with the teacher's role. Teachers were expected to have what was perceived as a moral superiority which put them above union activities. Finally:

> For many years...education was deemed 'non-political', in part based on a so-called 'liberal' consensus across political parties and interest groups that schooling was separate from the influence of partisan politics. The role of teacher was clearly that of servant to the community, and they were supposed to uphold the broad, liberal aims of the system as a whole. Thus, teacher opposition and political involvement were barely tolerated, and teacher militancy was virtually unheard of (Gordon and Wilson, in press).

Although largely debarred from industrial action, however, the teacher unions were able to negotiate through their close involvement with the central agencies of the state, in particular the Department of Education. They were viewed, and viewed themselves, as professionals, and this gave them power within the Keynesian democratic state that they would never have had as merely unionised workers. They were involved in every aspect of the education system, from policy development to curriculum issues, from management to implementation, and from the central state out to individual schools. This kind of professionalism brought with it some distinctly democratic elements; both for the teachers themselves in terms of an expansion of their role beyond teaching, and also in providing links between the central state and learners, which ensured that, to a certain extent, curricula and other educational policies would respond to the demands of civil society. In the 1970s and early 1980s, for example, the schooling system began to respond to calls by women and Maori groups for new initiatives both in curricula and in assessment processes.

However, in the context of the broader Keynesian accommodation, this kind of professionalism had its limits. On the one hand, teachers were very constrained in their ability to organise to improve their conditions of work. On the other hand, major inequalities in outcomes according to class, gender and ethnicity remained within the

schooling system, and there was little motivation within the teaching profession to investigate and solve the structures that perpetuated these inequalities (Codd, Harker and Nash, 1985).

The first documented national action by a teacher union in New Zealand took place in 1962, when the PPTA called on secondary teachers to refuse to mark School Certificate papers if they did not receive a substantial pay rise for doing so. After a long and very public debate, an independent commission granted large pay increases for this task. From 1970 onwards, the PPTA began to take a militant approach towards salary negotiations, with the result that secondary teacher salaries, which had been equal to those of the primary teachers, moved significantly ahead. In 1981, frustrated by this continuing trend, the NZEI broke its 99 year record of no industrial action, by calling a series of afternoon stopwork meetings. The outcome of this was that a continuing relativity between the primary and secondary sectors was assured, although the primary teachers continued to get much lower salaries.

By 1980 the view of education as non-political had begun to break down. This process was aided by the then Minister of Education, Mr. Wellington, who held a peculiar mixture of moral right ideas, although still within a broadly Keynesian framework. He offered open support to groups like the Concerned Parents Association, who constantly attacked teachers over issues such as sex education and their role in 'breaking down traditional family life'. Ignoring teachers, the Minister developed his own old boys' network to review the crucial core curriculum, and came out with a proposal that was in the 'back to basics' mold; one that was totally out of line with the kind of initiative being developed in schools. In 1984 he proposed that daily flag-raising ceremonies, which had been abandoned about 40 years previously, be re-instituted in schools. Teachers responded angrily to these, and other, policy developments, although little industrial action was taken at this time. They campaigned against the Government at the 1984 general election, and in July that year a Labour Government was swept to power in a landslide victory. However, instead of signalling a return to the Keynesian settlement of the past, the next six years were to bring a total repositioning of the role of the state, the education system and teachers.

The reform of education

Between 1984 and 1987, the new Labour Government completely restructured the economy, shifting the balance of power away from the primary industries sector, which had previously been assisted with tax concessions, tariffs, subsidies and guaranteed

prices. The new hegemonic power bloc (Jessop, 1990; Jessop, Bonnett and Bromley, 1990) within capital was broadly the finance sector, and more specifically large, mainly multinational, corporations whose wealth was derived from property and finance speculation and corporate raiding. For these groups, a free market offered the opportunity of unlimited accumulation of wealth. By the general election of August 1987 the nation was apparently mesmerised by the awesome sight of multi-storey buildings, and the Barclays share market index, rising at enormous rates. The Government was re-elected with an increased majority.

In Labour's second term of office (1987-1990), the focus switched from the economic system to the state, including the reshaping of state agencies and changes to the system of social welfare, health and education. A supermarket magnate, Brian Picot, was asked to head a Taskforce to examine the administrative structures of primary and secondary schooling. The resulting Report (Picot, 1988) recommended a complete restructuring of the education sector, including:

- the abolition of the Department of Education and its replacement with a smaller Ministry, which would have responsibility only for policy;
- the abolition of regional education boards;
- the devolution of all operational responsibilities to individual schools, which would be governed by newly constituted Boards of Trustees, primarily parents of children at the school who would be elected by parents;
- the devolution of two categories of funding, operational and salaries, to individual schools, which would be spent in meeting the objectives of the school;
- the development of a school charter, which would link the objectives of individual schools to national objectives; and
- the abolition of the Inspectorate and its replacement with a smaller Review and Audit Agency.

These changes to the administrative structures marked the start of the reform process. This is in contrast to the reforms in Britain, which began with the introduction of a national curriculum; there had been, in New Zealand, a formal national curriculum since

1944 in the secondary schools. Ball (1990) notes anyway that it was the administrative reforms of the ERA, rather than the curriculum, that instituted the most important changes, in market terms, to the education system in England. Indeed, despite the different starting points, the processes of reform have been more alike than different in the two countries.

Two sets of concerns provided the impetus for these administrative changes. The first set broadly stem from the Keynesian settlement, emphasising personal rights (Bowles and Gintis, 1987). Elsewhere, I have called this the 'community' orientation (Gordon, forthcoming b). These concerns embraced the issues of community empowerment and participation, in particular for those groups, particularly Maori, who were disadvantaged in the schooling system. The community view aimed to bring decision making closer to individual schools, and was against the power of the central bureaucracy to determine everything that went on in schools. The discourse of community empowerment is diffused throughout the Picot Report and the subsequent policy of *Tomorrow's Schools*.

So, however, is the discourse of the market. Alongside discussion of empowerment, is the language of choice; a choice that is being inhibited by an overly bureaucratic central state, pressure group politics and a 'paralysis of will', engendered by the inefficiencies of the system. In a fascinating study, Wilson (1991) extracted six paragraphs from the Picot Report and asked members of the Picot committee, representing bureaucrats, educationalists and industrialists, what they thought each meant. Different interpretations were given, depending on the stance of the respondent. The Picot Report, then, was a masterly example of the incorporation of both Keynesian and neo-liberal discourses. These did not sit together in happy unison, however. The discourse of Picot represented fundamental contradictions between the two positions, but did not resolve them. That resolution was to be played out in the implementation process, and it therefore set up further sites of struggle within the state, and between state, teachers and the new Boards of Trustees. The nature of the Picot Report and subsequent policy documents explains the extent of the contestation that has continued to occur over educational policy in the following three years.

The new structure suggested by Picot, and later confirmed by the policy document *Tomorrow's Schools* (Lange, 1988), was, however, clearly in line with neo-liberal ideals. It was to have profound implications for the positioning of teachers. Characteristics of the new system included the separation of policy from implementation, a switch from demand-led to supply-side mechanisms of funding

(Offe, 1985), a reduction in the size of the central state (as well as new roles for the central state), and the devolution of responsibility for education to individual schools.

Boston (1991) argues that reforms within the state sector as a whole in New Zealand have been guided by four 'theories': public choice theory, agency theory, transaction cost analysis and the "new public management" (Boston, 1991 p. 2). A central feature of these 'theories', taken together, is that they provide a quasi-privatized environment within the state, even where no privatization can or will occur. In other words, they share the free market ideals of monetarism but do not rely on the destruction of the welfare state for their implementation. Further, the implementation of these theories within the state forges a reshaped political terrain that makes the eventual destruction of the public sector more likely (Jessop et al, 1990).

The amalgamation of these management theories leads to a distinctive approach. A central feature relates to the view of human behaviour as essentially self-interested as individuals and in groups: "government officials are believed to maximise their departmental budgets, while politicians seek to maximise their votes" (Boston, 1991 p. 3). Hence, these theories stress the need for firm contracts between 'principal' and 'agent', the separation of policy from operations (so that those making policy will not have a vested interest in the outcomes of their deliberations) and a series of mechanisms which will ensure that the state does not grow unduly due to bureaucratic capture. The new system of education would have a strong central state, but one relatively removed from the daily issues and contestations of the education system. The system itself would be kept in place through a powerful system of contracts; centrally, the school charter, the new system of educational review, and an employer/employee relationship between boards of trustees, the principal and the teachers.

There is little doubt that the neo-liberal interpretation of the Picot Report aimed to disempower teachers at all levels of the system. Teachers, in particular, were to be removed from their previously close relationship with the state agencies of education. The Department and the Inspectorate were both abolished. At the level of the school, the Picot Report talked of a collaborative management model, but also reshaped the role of principal into that of industrial manager. Teachers were also (and with justification, considering subsequent events) concerned that the devolution of their salary funds to individual schools would lead to the breakdown of the national system of salaries and conditions.

The contradictions within the Picot Report and Tomorrow's Schools between the discourses of market and community pervaded the implementation process. At first, teachers were excluded from membership of the working parties set up to implement the new structure. However, after pressure on the Government, particularly at the 1988 Labour Party Conference which was fortuitously held only weeks after Tomorrow's Schools was released, teacher unions gained representation on most working parties. The final composition of these working parties was interesting, as they were largely made up of staff of the doomed Department of Education, plus teacher union representatives. Given a policy that was so contradictory, space was opened up for reinterpretation and some changes to the declared policy. In some key areas, notably school charters, the Special Education Service (which was saved from privatization), and a postponement of the devolution of teacher salaries to individual schools, important changes were made, and agreed to by the Government. The policy was implemented, as proposed, on October 1st, 1989.

Those state agencies who were pushing the neo-liberal agenda, notably Treasury (who in 1987 had released their own major report on education; Treasury, 1987) and the State Services Commission, had effectively been excluded from the implementation process; but not from its aftermath. Citing a failure of the reforms to make the expected fiscal savings, Treasury succeeded in having a review committee appointed less than three months after the reforms were implemented. This committee released a report, *Today's Schools,* in April 1990.

Without any input from those pushing the 'community' viewpoint, this committee was able to produce a blueprint for the neo-liberal schooling system. In terms of the concerns of this paper, *Today's Schools* is notable for its lack of discussion of teachers - they rate only four mentions in the whole document. This is centrally, it seems, because this Report did not see teachers playing a very central role, beyond their day to day teaching, in individual schools or in the system as a whole. For example, the Report is quick to reinforce the work of Boards of Trustees as 'employers'; three barriers to this role being carried out were identified as:

- Boards do not have discretion to shift funds between their salary and operational budgets (at the time that the Committee reported, it had been announced that bulk funding of teacher salaries would be implemented in 1992)

- Principals primarily identify as professional leaders rather than managers

- Elements of industrial awards are inconsistent with the new framework of devolved education administration

(Lough, 1990: 18)

As Codd (1990) argues, *Today's Schools* brings a new focus to the educational reforms at the level of the individual school. There is a distinct shift in this report from the collaborative model of decision-making described by Picot and *Tomorrow's Schools*, to a model of managerialism, where the school is envisaged as a business, Trustees as Directors, and the Principal as Manager. Note, for example, the tone of the following statement relating to Principals' roles in staff development:

> To support teachers in carrying out their professional role by identifying areas of skill deficiency and making available appropriate training to correct these deficiencies (1990: 24).

The reform of educational administration had quite clearly worked to exclude teachers from involvement in central policy processes. *Today's Schools*, by framing teachers as employees, involved only in their specific operational activities, and largely excluded (except in terms of their single representative on the Board of Trustees) from school policy decisions (which were to be the exclusive domain of the Board) were now positioned as mere minions: as the operators on the production line who would carry out orders from above. There is overt encouragement in *Today's Schools* for Boards of Trustees to see themselves as employers, including quite detailed notes (pp21-22) on this role, including a recommendation for the introduction of "pay flexibility" for teachers. Boards of Trustees were reminded that they are:

> ... the formal employer of their staff and have responsibilities which include recruitment, appointment, review, training and remuneration (1990 p. 17).

The themes of *Today's Schools* were taken up in more depth by the State Services Commission (SSC) in its (1990) brief to the incoming Minister, in a special paper on the education sector. This document launches a scathing attack on the post-Picot implementation process, and in particular on the role of 'interest groups', especially the Ministry of Education and teachers, in 'subverting' the original intent of the reforms. Annex B to the document is devoted to 'problems with the implementation process':

> The large number of such (educational) groups and the intensive nature of their work meant central agency officials had only limited influence on the process.

> Chairpersons appear to have been appointed primarily on the basis of the respect they commanded in the education field, rather than their independence or objectivity. It was obvious from some of the policy papers that were rejected, that some working group members were opposed to the reforms and very few members had direct knowledge of the Government's policy formulation process or of its objectives for the state sector as a whole. In fact, because individual members were often chosen as representatives of particular organisations rather than on the basis of personal qualities, they apparently used the working groups as a negotiating forum or as a means to preserve the status quo (1990 p. 2).

The effects of the involvement of interest groups in the implementation process is analysed as follows:

> The State Services Commission considers that this was an inefficient implementation process that provided a wealth of opportunities for relitigation of policy and the watering down of various policy intents.... This process by which interested organisations developed proposals which were then commented on by officials is the direct reversal of the way in which policy is usually developed. It apparently created a false expectation among working party members about their ability to influence Government policy. In some respects the implementation process was a process of detailed consultation rather than a process of policy development. However, it seems that the new Ministry regularly uses this approach in its policy development which suggests it may have difficulty in providing neutral advice of a high quality (1990: 2).

The document argues that the lack of control over interest groups in the implementation phase prevented the reforms being properly implemented. The Ministry of Education, the SSC claims, is dominated by ex-senior teachers, who "tend to promote educationalist agendas and still have strong cultural affiliations and regular contact with the teacher unions and professional associations" (1990: 6). Because of the inadequate implementation process, the Ministry remained much larger than Picot envisaged (ibid: 17), and was still captured by teachers. As a result, the processes and outcomes of policy advice by the Ministry are questionable (ibid: 19-20).

Both Treasury and the SSC hinge most of their arguments on the self-interest of teachers and bureaucrats. The solution to this self-interest, they argue, is to deny groups access to decision-making; hence the emphasis on defining the role and position of each player in the new system. More seriously, however, both agencies seem to

suggest that decisions about education should be made by anyone except educators. Policy decisions made in the new managerialist state are said to be rational only when made by those with no apparent interest (and this is interpreted primarily as an *economic* interest) in the outcomes of the policy process. Thus, policy advice or contestation emanating from educators within the Ministry, from teachers and from students can be delegitimated simply because of its source. On the other hand, advice from agencies such as Treasury or the State Services Commission (and these two agencies in particular) is legitimate simply because under this model it is neutral, in the sense that those proffering that advice have no discernible interest in the outcomes (according to this definition of interest).

The timing of the State Services Commission brief was crucial. In October 1990, Labour was swept out of office with a landslide loss far larger than its huge win in 1984. A National Government, which lacked Labour's social conscience and yet was committed to following on its monetarist policies, was elected.

Many actions of the new government have impacted heavily on teachers. In the industrial relations area, the Employment Contracts Act was passed into law in May 1991. This Act removed any special status for unions, and reduced labour relations to a series of contracts, either individual or collective, between employers and workers. For teachers this meant that, when the teacher salaries component of bulk grants was devolved, individual schools would be in a position to negotiate salaries and conditions with their teachers, so long as the State Services Commission gave permission. This added great impetus to the fight against bulk salaries funding (see Gordon, forthcoming a). Primary and secondary teachers joined other education sector unions in a one day strike on April 4th. In 1991 bulk funding and the withdrawal of government funds from the education sector became the two main issues.

In the introduction I talked of the new hegemonic power bloc within capital being the finance sector and large multinational corporations. Recognising their own strength, these groups combined to form a powerful new organisation, called the New Zealand Business Roundtable. The NZBR is an organisation committed to a neo-liberal reshaping of the state. In early 1991, this group released a report written for them by Stuart Sexton, who had visited New Zealand briefly a year previously.

Following on from *Today's Schools* and the SSC, Sexton (1991: 32) sees teachers as having subverted the reform process. This does not surprise him: "In most countries,

teaching professions are the most powerful of all the political constituencies in education":

> The promise of a much reduced central bureaucracy has, therefore, not materialised. Moreover, most of the new boards and agencies have been staffed by people formerly employed by the Department of Education, the Education Boards, or one of the other former bodies. As a senior government official put it to me, the previous Department of Education officials are reasserting themselves all over again: "enlightened self-interest masquerading as moral principles" (1991: 33).

In relation to teacher's salaries, Sexton argues that:

> The Board of Trustees should be free to negotiate separately and individually with each teacher they employ, both on initial pay and conditions and on any subsequent pay adjustments. Each teacher would be on an individual contract to the Board of Trustees (1991, p.70).

Written before the Employment Contracts Act was ever heard of, Sexton nevertheless anticipates its content. The role of teachers is to teach. They should have no involvement in policy processes. Instead of collaborative management and staff development, they are to be subject to the discipline of strict industrial relations and surprise inspections from a small but robust Inspectorate. The old professional settlement of teachers, in which they were involved in every aspect of the system from teaching to national policy-making, and were concerned to develop the system as a whole, is over. In other words, teachers are to be proletarianised. Further, they are to compete with each other and with other schools. Teacher registration should become voluntary, and Boards should negotiate salaries with each teacher (See Jesson 1991a and b, and Marshall, Peters and Smith 1991 for an analysis). Finally, a solution to the ongoing problems of educational management is the implementation of a voucher system.

The Sexton Report, however, represented only one aspect of the NZBR campaign. Jesson (1991a p.2) notes that the press release accompanying the Sexton Report finished by stating that: "the Business Roundtable plans to give a high priority to supporting efforts to improve New Zealand's education performance in the period ahead". She comments:

> The Sexton Report was greeted with scorn and derision from many in education. It was considered to be superficial, not reflecting the reality of the New Zealand educational situation and poorly researched, and was dismissed as just propaganda. However, what was missed was that the last paragraph of the press release was the significant one. The Business Roundtable was setting its sights on education and supporting a particular political agenda. It was not a matter for rational debate as the academics believed, it is a matter of ideological struggle (1991a p. 2).

Jesson's position is borne out by subsequent activities of the NZBR in 1991. One of the problems that the NZBR had was that it had limited legitimacy in addressing educational issues; there are no educators in the organisation. Showing an awareness of this problem the Director, Roger Kerr, set out to form a group of prominent educators into a mouthpiece for the NZBR; educators who had shown some sympathy for the organisation's neo-liberal aims. The *Education Forum* met for the first time on 22 March. At this meeting, Kerr tabled an NZBR report on the bulk funding of teacher salaries, which was to be submitted to eight cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister and Minister of Education. In strongly advocating the immediate implementation of bulk funding, the report uses an analysis identical to that of the State Services Commission. It recommends a pupil-first funding formula, and the ability of schools both to transfer funds between operational and salary grants and to raise funds locally for salaries, if they wish. This report, too, recommends voucher-based funding to "allow direct competition between public and private schools" (NZBR, 1991 p. 4).

In the letter accompanying this document to the Ministers, Roger Kerr stated that, at the meeting of the *Education Forum*, "there was unanimous support for the principle of bulk funding". It was later established that no support had been requested or offered (Jesson, 1991a p. 6), but this firmly established the Forum's role in supporting the NZBR. Later in the year, the Forum commissioned a public opinion poll on education, designed purely to elicit responses supportive of the neo-liberal project.

By the time of the 1991 Budget in July, the powerful state agencies of Treasury and the State Services Commission had become united with the equally powerful Business Roundtable in articulating a new direction for education; one they claimed had been intended by the Picot Report, but which clearly went far beyond that Report in its adherence to neo-liberal ideals. Their proposals, and their argument that the Ministry of Education was an untrustworthy source of educational policy advice, fell on receptive ears. The government, struggling through a major fiscal crisis and ideologically in line

with these ideas, ordered a series of 17 reviews of the education system. Many of these reviews showed major disagreements in analysis and prescription between the Ministry on the one hand and Treasury and the State Services Commission on the other.

The budget document on education, in almost all respects, took the advice of Treasury and the SSC over the Ministry. There were a number of significant new policies announced affecting teachers. Compulsory teacher registration was to be abolished, and replaced with voluntary registration (Minister of Education, 1991). This meant, in effect, that Sexton's view that anyone could be a teacher was upheld. The number of teachers was to be reduced, particularly in secondary schools, as a result of a more stringent application of staffing guidelines and policy changes regarding transition education. Some schools would lose up to eight teachers. The document promoted a competitive education system, with full self management. Finally, a voluntary scheme would be set up to trial bulk funding of teacher salaries in 1992. The funding method advocated was direct and pupil-led; the same method identified by the SSC as being the closest possible to vouchers, and one the Ministry (1991) argued would be totally unworkable in small and rural schools.

In this analysis of the central state, and the relationship between the state and one sector of capital, two themes important for this paper are evident. First, the almost inexorable move towards the blueprint for education promoted by the neo-liberal agencies. Within the state, it is fairly clear that systems and processes have been reshaped to provide legitimacy to certain agencies above others. This has impacted in particular on the Ministry of Education, which has been progressively excluded from policy decision making. Second, it is striking that so few people and agencies have been so successful in constructing and implementing recent changes to education policy. However, despite these exclusive and extremely anti-democratic processes, one of the features of New Zealand's education system is that the central state is dependent on agencies and people far removed from it for the implementation of policy; in particular Boards of Trustees and teachers. In the final part of this paper, I will consider these educational policies and their effects in civil society.

Teachers, civil society and democratic education: towards a new settlement?

Over the past twenty years, and particularly in the period since 1984, New Zealand has been coming to new, if contested, views about what constitutes democracy. In earlier

times, democracy was centrally about the rights of the majority to elect governments to work on their behalf coupled with, since the first Labour Government's social security legislation, the right of everyone to share in the resources of this country (although not equally), including the rights to income support, health care and education.

Since the early 1970s in New Zealand, however, these earlier rights of access, and later participation, have been increasingly supplemented by calls for equality of outcomes. Two groups, women and Maori, stand out in this respect. To these groups, democracy meant re-evaluating the basis of the distribution of wealth, land, power and status in the society. In the field of education, the marginalised status of women and particularly Maori has been subject to increased scrutiny and calls for change; calls which state agencies have responded to, however inadequately.

The period of the fourth Labour Government saw these democratic goals of equality of outcomes come increasingly into conflict with the new system of state management that accompanied the switch to monetarism. Snook (1991) argues that the neo-liberal thinking that came to dominate the state at this time is, in fact, necessarily anti-democratic. The Labour Government became inextricably caught up between two conflicting agendas: a neo-liberal state and a fully democratic society. There are many specific instances of these contradictions, for example the way the sale of state forestry assets clashed with Maori land rights, and the general impoverishment of women, as the group in our society with the least income, at the same time as specific women's causes received their greatest level of support ever (e.g. childcare). In education, Labour were frequently torn between the 'public choice' model emanating from Treasury and the State Services Commission and the obvious commitment of the teacher unions to a better, more equitable and more democratic schooling system (see Gordon forthcoming a and b).

Armed with 'public choice' and 'agency' theories, which are themselves underpinned by the economics of the free market, certain agencies within the state have increasingly forced their own ideas into the education sector. These agencies have powerful friends. In a monetarist economy, finance capital and multinational corporations inevitably constitute the *dominant fraction* of capital; in Jessop et al's (1990) terms, that group within capital which forces its own interests onto capital as a whole, so that capital appears united as a hegemonic bloc, with consequent effects on the state. The Sexton Report, the NZBR's own submission to cabinet on bulk funding, and the formation by Roger Kerr of the *Education Forum* can be seen as strategies by this dominant bloc of

capital, aided by Treasury and the SSC, to extend their ideologies into the educational sphere.

The success of these policies is, however, being hampered by both fiscal and legitimation crises of the state (Codd, Gordon and Harker 1990; Nash, 1989). In electoral terms, the consensus is that New Zealanders voted Labour out of office because they felt betrayed by monetarist policies, rather than a desire to continue these policies in an even more extreme form. National is now the most unpopular government in the country's history, and a new alliance of social democratic parties is receiving a lot of support. As well, the purist implementation of monetarism has ensured that New Zealand's rate of unemployment is one of the highest in the world. With less money coming in through taxes, and more going out, the state is in an apparently unending fiscal crisis, which is being exacerbated by its economic policies.

Jessop *et al* (1990) note that the development of a strong central state must ideally be coupled with the development of new forms of control within civil society that support the state's goals. As the state withdraws to the centre, the space left must be filled with new alliances that uphold the aims of the state. In the New Zealand educational reforms, those pushing the neo-liberal approach have expected this role to be filled by Boards of Trustees. From the neo-liberal perspective, Boards of Trustees have two central roles. In relation to the state they are the 'agent', receiving and disbursing funds and negotiating and implementing policies according to national goals and the school charter. In relation to teachers and the school community, Boards are, respectively, 'employers' and 'representatives'.

However, in each of these roles Boards of Trustees have not acted as expected. They have contested state actions in relation to school charters (Codd and Gordon, 1991), the funding system for schools and attempts to privatise peripheral services. Evidence from two surveys shows that Trustees are extremely discontented with their role.

It is in relation to teachers and school communities, however, that Trustees have particularly failed to act as an arm of the neo-liberal state. In particular, Trustees have shown a distinct reluctance to act fully as employers of teachers. This reluctance was noted in the Lough Report, but was dealt with as a technical problem - a lack of training and experience - rather than as a political issue. Wylie's (1991 p. 63) study of Boards of Trustees reported that 89 percent of Trustees considered their relationships with school staff to be excellent or good. None considered there to be major problems. The Monitoring Today's Schools questionnaire to Trustees demonstrated a generally

positive relationship between Trustees and teachers, at both formal and informal levels. Few Trustees had considered it necessary to get training in industrial relations, and only 5 percent reported that they had not had informal contact with teachers on a range of issues. Only 2 percent of Trustees considered it not to be worthwhile to have a teacher representative on the Board.

In summary, it appears as if teachers and Trustees have a more informal and positive relationship than that proposed in the managerial model of *Today's Schools*. Trustees do not appear to act in the Board of Directors role which, in particular, Sexton envisages. Further, on a crucial issue, the devolution of the bulk funding of teacher salaries, Boards right across the country have sided with the teachers against the policy. Wylie's (1991) survey of Trustees found that 79 percent were definitely opposed to the full devolution of bulk funding. It seems likely that only a handful of secondary schools will opt into the bulk funding trial in 1992, and most of those primary schools who are entering are precisely those for whom the Ministry claims it cannot work - small, rural schools (Ministry of Education, 1991). As well, Boards are resisting proposals to employ untrained teachers, and emphasising the need to maintain highly paid professional teachers in their schools. However, if bulk funding is finally introduced across the whole country (which seems less and less likely given the failure to attract volunteer schools to the scheme) and if overall funding on education continues to be cut, then it is likely that serious conflict between teachers and Boards will arise. At present, though, Boards are not acting as agents and apostles of the neo-liberal vision of education. Indeed, as the Chairperson of the National School Trustees Association put it:

> School Trustees recognise with increasing clarity that it is their voluntary commitment which now underpins the education system. It is by no means certain that the Government fully appreciates that, in matters of school management, it is hostage to the goodwill and cooperation of schools boards (quoted in Gordon, forthcoming a).

At present, teachers are really feeling the pressure of the educational reforms. They are excluded from central policy processes, derided by some state agencies, fractions of capital and various cabinet ministers, and forced to work harder (Sullivan, 1991; see also the Monitoring Today's Schools project) and in increasingly difficult conditions. It is interesting that teacher unions which, a decade ago, had virtually never taken industrial action, have responded to this pressure by massively increasing their political role, and are now at the forefront of the struggle against the restructuring of the welfare

state. The unions have used television advertising, newspaper articles and advertisements and the radio to get across their message. They have urged diverse groups: principals, boards of trustees, parents in general, Maori groups and other unions to unite against the state's actions in education. Their campaigns have, appropriately, attempted to educate people about education policies (Lauder, 1991).

It appears that, to a certain extent, this strategy may have worked. Their argument, that New Zealand has one of the best education systems in the world (and in literacy teaching the very best; Elley, 1991), and that the new policies are destroying this system, seems to have struck a popular chord. There is little anti-teacher propaganda in the media. Most people seem to support teachers in their struggle. In the absence of a democratic voice in the educational state, the teachers have gone, in effect, straight to the people. Thus, it seems that we are seeing the tentative emergence of new democratic alliances outside of the state, which are strongly opposed to the state's neo-liberal agenda (and not just in education).

Indeed, in retrospect, those who were restructuring education in the neo-liberal image have erred badly in two respects. Firstly, excluding teachers from the central state has, in effect, freed them to seek alliances and support elsewhere, in opposition to the state. Under the Keynesian settlement, teachers were bound to the state much more closely through incorporation, even though overt and coercive controls were largely absent. Now, teachers have been freed to seek support where they will. The second error was the assumption that parents as Boards of Trustees would fully support the new education policies, and would be prepared to act in an employer relationship to teachers. The failure of trustees to support the devolution of teacher salary funding is a major blow to the neo-liberal state.

There is little that can be done about the first error. However, the second is at present being addressed in an Education Amendment Bill before Parliament, called, in order to proclaim its ideological links with the British system, the Education Reform Bill. There are three aspects to the Bill which are vehemently opposed by both the teacher unions and the School Trustees Association; all of them come more or less directly from the Sexton Report. The first is to remove the minimum staffing ratio for schools, which at present guarantees that schools will be adequately staffed. The second is a proposal to allow representatives of organisations to sit on Boards of Trustees, and is aimed at involving businesses in school management. The final change allows people, other than parents of children at the school, to be elected by parents. This is again directed at encouraging business people to become involved in school management.

The aim of the two latter changes is clearly to change the composition of Boards of Trustees, in order to bring them in line, presumably, with the state's goals for education. The former change is merely a further erosion of teachers' conditions of work, in line with the process of proletarianisation that has already occurred. It seems certain that this legislation will be passed into law. However, even these changes cannot ensure that the neo-liberal state will 'win' education; they may have unintended consequences once implemented.

The process of educational reform in New Zealand continues to be one of marked contestation. Teachers have been repositioned from 'professional' to 'proletarian', but they have responded by seeking democratic support outside of the state; a response that has been very successful, in line with the widespread opposition to the destruction of the welfare state in New Zealand. The continual fiscal and legitimatory crises of the New Zealand state, the failure of monetarist economic reforms, the continued decline of the finance sector of capital and strong support for the continued strength of the welfare state have shaped a series of democratic alliances that are potentially very powerful. There will be a general election in 1993. The 'market' view can claim numerous victories in the reshaping of education, but it is more than possible that the community view will yet have the last word.

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